Military Police Functions in Kosovo

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As an MP soldier, you know that new "hot spots" in the world will cause soldiers somewhere to receive a call to train, prepare to deploy, deploy, and then operate in that "hot spot." The 793d MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, received such a call the first week of June 1999 and then quickly deployed to Kosovo on 12 June in support of Task Force (TF) Falcon to stabilize and then restore peace to the war-torn province of Kosovo. The 18th MP Brigade was to form an MP battalion with three companies. The HHD, 793d MP Battalion, 630th MP Company (793d MP Battalion); 127th MP Company (709th MP Battalion); and 1st MP Company (1st Infantry Division) were to deploy to Kosovo in support of TF Falcon. The following is a summary of the MP actions, some lessons learned (and relearned), and some food for thought gleaned from the Spartan Battalion's quick move from various communities in Germany to Camps Montieth and Bondsteel, Kosovo, in support of TF Falcon.

PREDEPLOYMENT

When the 793d MP Battalion received the call to begin preparing for deployment to Kosovo with one company and the battalion headquarters, the opportunity to excel was enormous. The battalion had just completed a major training exercise at the MOUT facility in Hammelburg, GE. Also, the battalion had one platoon deployed from the 212th MP Company to Sarajevo and one platoon from the 212th MP Company and three platoons and one company headquarters, 615th MP Company, deployed in Tiranes, Albania, supporting TF Hawk. Therefore, the deployment of the 630th MP Company and the battalion headquarters was a "come-as-you-are" deployment, made much more difficult because of the deployments already underway and the fact that the battalion still had its community law-enforcement commitments in nine communities.

Two readiness preparation programs significantly enhanced our deployment capabilities: our officer professional development (OPD) program and our quarterly deployment conferences. We use a portion of our OPD program as the key to gaining knowledge of an area of responsibility (AOR). While our OPD consists of the "typical" METL-related topics, it also includes an S2 briefing to open the session. The S2 briefing familiarizes the officers with the EUCOM AOR, a current "hot spot" in the AOR, or some other significant event of the times.

In the six months leading to our deployment, we had discussed aspects of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Israel, and Iraq. Our leaders knew the terrain; they became familiar with some key political, military, and ethnic group leaders; and they knew some of the nuances of the people of these areas. Our quarterly readiness program reviewed the status of rail- and air-load teams, family-support-group (FSG) rosters and programs, team training (NBC, field sanitation, combat lifesaver), and deployment status of individual soldiers. In essence, it was no problem to air-load our initial-entry force and complete personnel deployment processing (PDP) for the battalion well ahead of schedule.

DEPLOYMENT

When we received the order to prepare to deploy, we conducted the mission analysis. The mission analysis is key, and analyzing the implied tasks is as essential to our success as MP as any other part of the military decisionmaking process (MDMP). In the TF planning, we only recognized a need to enter Kosovo through a border crossing. In planning, we did not fully grasp the impact of the eventual wording in the military technical agreement that required Kosovo Forces (KFOR) to secure the border crossings between Kosovo and non-Serbian countries. We knew there was a major crossing point in our AOR; we had visited it during deployments with the UN peacekeeping mission in Macedonia. We knew there were refugees, several hundred thousand, within Macedonia and only several kilometers from the Kosovo border.

What we did not calculate was the enormity of the operation to run an actual border crossing (control, customs, immigration), move all KFOR units north into Kosovo, and then assist with the earlier-than-expected onward movement of refugees back into Kosovo. Once the refugees saw NATO's tenacity, and realized the Serbia Army

quickly and completely withdrew, the rush was on to return to their villages and begin to piece together their lives before winter set in.

What complicated our matters was there was no other feasible route (not mined) into Kosovo; our main supply route (MSR) and only deployment route was the one and only route available. This repatriation was also the first realization at the ground level that the United Nations High Com-mission for Refugees (UNHCR) and KFOR had not developed a plan to keep refugees from returning to Kosovo until after KFOR completed the initial deployment into theater.

The Army tends to deploy forces to these type peacekeeping operations based on force cap, not necessarily by what mission analysis reveals is necessary to accomplish the mission. This was the case for our deployment. We took three companies at current strength (about 66-percent strength; we could fill two of three squads in every Corps MP unit) and were only "allowed" a small initial-entry force package.

Our initial-entry force package consisted of a small battalion element (battalion commander, S3, S4, signal officer, battalion maintenance NCO, and some operations personnel from the S3), a small company headquarters (operations, communications, company commander), two MP platoons, one PSD squad for the TF commander, one K9 team, and one CID agent. Our experiences in Bosnia and Albania showed us that if the 05-level commanders don't get on the ground early, the deployment of the rest of the unit is much more difficult.

Leaving the battalion XO to deploy the forces works well and allows the battalion commander and key staff to set the stage early for reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) of MP forces. The dividends paid during this deployment were significant as the S3 and battalion commander were able to influence deployment sequences from the intermediate staging base (ISB) into Kosovo -- the land we were to occupy for our portion of the base camp, communications, and other significant elements necessary to ensure early operational success.

The initial-entry forces flew into Macedonia, which was a relatively smooth process. We took the typical equipment necessary for initial operations and survival. The follow-on forces shipped out by rail from home stations, and then supercargo accompanied the equipment by ship to Greece for road movement through Macedonia into Kosovo. The units that kept radios, gun mounts, and squad boxes secured in their vehicles for this sea movement were ready (and thankfully so) to begin operations immediately upon arrival in Kosovo.

The other units, concerned about pilferage during transport, placed everything except their individual weapons in MILVANs. Needless to say, there was a time delay before these units became operationally ready. There was no major pilferage on the sea movement; items were locked and tied down using cargo straps or banding material.

OPERATIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Soldiers are eager to accomplish *real-life* missions. Leaders step forward, soldiers perform superbly, systems click, and Murphy generally becomes a nonissue. In our deployment to Kosovo, MP came very close to conducting *corps rear-area operations* as you might expect to perform in a major land war. We had paramilitary forces still operating, refugees, criminal elements, minefields, enemy equipment that had been destroyed and damaged cluttering the battlefield, and a non-functioning local government.

In the six months of operations in Kosovo, the battalion logged over 532,000 miles, apprehended and processed over 1,257 detainees, responded to over 2,354 incidents, assisted in the return of over 280,000 refugees, and performed over 560 security-related missions. We operated one main MP station, seven substations and one information center, one detention camp, one jail facility, one impound lot, one captured-equipment site, one captured weapons MILVAN, and several evidence containers. We conducted over 3,000 squad-sized patrols in seven major cities or large towns, over 2,300 square kilometers in our AOR, and over 400 kilometers of MSR. The following is a recap of the battlefield functions MP encountered in this peacekeeping

operation:

MANEUVER AND MOBILITY SUPPORT OPERATIONS (MMSOs)

The battalion performed in an outstanding manner in this facet of the operations. One of the key tasks we had to conduct was keeping the MSR clear for all KFOR units to move from Macedonia into Kosovo. We used two platoons at peak capacity at the border entry point in the town of Djeneral Jankovic. For the first two months, this border crossing was the only crossing open into Kosovo from Macedonia.

Our biggest problem was congestion -- a result of the massive numbers of convoys entering Kosovo, the unexpected early and large numbers of refugees entering Kosovo, the large number of contractor vehicles, such as gravel trucks for Brown and Root operations, and the numerous humanitarian-aid vehicles. At times, we operated a defile up to six kilometers in length.

Our communications and mobility were superb and allowed us to accomplish the mission. We took control of a nonfunctioning cement factory and former UCK (Kosovo Liberation Army) strongpoint and turned it into a large vehicle-holding area as we quickly found out that the Macedonia Border Control operations were using manual methods to log and track every vehicle (nonmilitary) and person entering and departing Kosovo. There were waits of up to 36 hours to enter Kosovo and Macedonia yet, to the credit of superb platoon leaders, platoon sergeants, and MP, KFOR military convoys were never delayed at the border for more than five or 10 minutes.

To accomplish the border mission, as mentioned, we made extensive use of our manpack SINCGARs. We requested and received tactical satellite (TACSAT) radios (one each for the border crossing, the battalion and company headquarters, and each of our MP stations). The TACSAT was literally a lifesaver several times as it was the only communications we had between the border and the base camp. We used the TACSAT for routine reports, MEDEVAC requests for civilians who had stepped on land mines in the area, and other requests for assistance. Timely information is always important to commanders and this was the case for the border operations as well.

The remaining MMSO tasks were the more "routine" reconnaissance; route regulation and enforcement; straggler-control operations; and responding to, and clearing scenes of, traffic accidents, explosions, and other incidents disrupting the flow of traffic. The lessons learned included the need for TACSAT. As hard as we worked it, the AM communications gear simply did not work reliably.

We also found that our training program before deployment was on target and the STXs in the new MTPs adequately prepared us for MMSOs in Kosovo. The equipment we have is appropriately suited to complete this type of mission as well. As the manpack radios are somewhat inconvenient to pull out of the vehicle and wear, the battalion later relied on "secure hand-held radios." The range decreased, but the soldiers could operate more easily with these radios.

AREA SECURITY OPERATIONS

Securing dignitaries, up to and including the President of the United States; securing facilities; and providing security of convoys or along routes were tasks that we performed routinely. The TF received over 300 visitors in the six months we were in Kosovo (no dignitaries the first 30 days or so). What Kosovo did provide both the combat arms and our MP battalion was the realization that area security is much more difficult than we see in training areas or in computer simulations. In computer simulations, we hear the guidance, "Kill the SPF, every one of them."

There was a group (actually we believed there were several groups) in Kosovo that fired mortars at Serb villages. The mortar man, as he became known to KFOR and citizens, was very successful at targeting only Serb populations and then evading capture. With the MP and scouts, the TF could saturate an area and prevent firings. The other mortar men had many targets and more patience than we did. If we left an area, the mortar team would move in with a vehicle or hay-covered wagon, fire the shells, and be gone within minutes, often sliding right into a nearby town. There were never any witnesses. Our general perception became that there was no such thing as an Albanian witness to a crime against a Serb.

The field artillery unit had a lock on the firing point one time and could not get the permission in time to counterfire. Does this sound familiar to those of us who routinely operate (or train to operate) in the rear areas? Sure it does. As our joint planning and response times improved, we did find one complete mortar tube and another baseplate. We did capture one group but were ordered to release them by the Albanian magistrates as they declined to prosecute one individual and released the others on their own recognizance, pending a court date.

We did find a small cache buried in a yard and did find some mortar-related pieces in a barn during one of our many hundred house searches, but we never struck gold. We learned very quickly that finding a cache, or picking out a covert paramilitary-type force in the rear area, was about the most difficult mission any of our troops (to include scouts, long-range reconnaissance teams, special forces) had undertaken. The only sure-fire way to stop the mortar attacks for us was to saturate the area with patrols.

INTERNMENT OPERATIONS

Although in some ways very similar, internment operations in Kosovo were quite difficult and different than EPW operations for which we train. The engineer unit built the holding facility right from our Field Manual (FM) 19-4, *Military Police Battlefield Circulation Control, Area Security, and Enemy Prisoner of War Operations.* Our first detainee was a murder suspect. We thought of this facility as a rather temporary facility as we heard very early on that UN police would be arriving soon and taking over many of the police functions. Believing this, we had the engineers build a small rudimentary triple-stranded concertina facility to hold about 48 detainees (four GP mediums, administration area). Very shortly, we realized that the UN would not be on board as quickly as anticipated, nor would the courts and jail facilities be established as quickly as anticipated.

With no judicial system and no theater-holding facility as you might expect to see in a war, we were left to keep detainees on a long-term basis. Using the FM for guidance, we had the engineers build a larger facility to hold up to 130 detainees. The facility soon had an inflatable/portable shower. We had the administration/processing tent, a visitor's tent, an interrogation tent (for both the CI personnel and our own MP and CID investigators), a lawyer tent and courtroom tent for what we would label as a pretrial hearing, living areas (Tier III GP mediums), porta-potties, guard towers, and a supply area.

A significant revelation for the TF was that long-term detainees require slightly different handling than your typical EPWs where prisoners move in and out quite frequently (at division- and corps-level holding areas). The detention facility must provide for visitors, lawyers, and judges. We set up the visitation program similar to that of a regional correctional facility. Our facility had procedures for medical care, and we had training and procedures for dispensing medications.

To keep our MP requirements to a platoon-sized operation to run the facility, we incorporated K9 teams into daily detention-facility operations. The handlers trained their dogs within eyesight of the facility, a great deterrent to possible escapees. We had K9s present for every dignitary that visited. When our detainee population rose above 80, we had K9s patrol the facility every evening, staying into the night. The K9 teams were superb. We incorporated them into the detention operation in such a way as it had minimal impact on other missions we tasked them to perform.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited several times. They provided some reading material and cigarettes. Because of the sanitary conditions and general poor health of the detainees (we had some with active TB, heart problems), we kept the detainees on an MRE diet with bottled water. Although this took the ICRC by surprise, as they initially learned the detainees were not eating the same type meals the soldiers were, the ICRC concurred that the MRE provided the safest food source and were best for the detainees. We had no disease out-breaks, sanitary problems, or any other food-related incidents, and the ICRC agreed with our policy (or at least didn't file a complaint).

As we established our detention operations, we recognized a void in MP and TF planning concerning logistical support for detainment operations. As these detainees were in a pretrial, not EPW status, we afforded them certain rights that EPWs might not receive. In doing this, we had to figure from where the resources would come. The S4 learned quickly how to order from military supply channels or where to buy on the economy (which at first was nonexistent).

We provided sleeping bags, cots, blankets, personal hygiene items, shower shoes, personal items storage bins (for watches, belts, shoe strings), pants, shirts, jackets (winter coats), boots, games, books, reading material, and other items to detainees upon their long-term incarceration in our facility.

RESETTLEMENT OPERATIONS

International organizations estimated that there were anywhere from 600,000 to 800,000 refugees who fled Kosovo into neighboring Albania and Macedonia. Several hundred thousand of these refugees fled to Macedonia and settled into camps just south of the Kosovo-Macedonia Border. As these refugees fled, many were reportedly beaten, killed, or injured. Many had their personal papers and monies stolen. We found several locations where personal documents had apparently been burnt. Cars and tractors were confiscated and, prior to the Serbs departing Kosovo, were stripped of most working/valuable parts and left to rust all along the border-crossing points.

When U.S. and other KFOR moved into Kosovo, the word quickly spread that the Serbs had indeed left. Knowing many houses had been ransacked and torched and that Balkan winters would be approaching fast, many Kosovo Albanians still in Kosovo quickly organized and began feeding reports or traveling to Macedonia. They quickly let families know when forces had cleared a given town and that it was "fairly" safe to return and begin life anew.

Within two weeks of arriving in Kosovo, KFOR now had to deal with a steady stream of family members in Kosovo heading south, mostly on foot or Macedonia taxi, into Macedonia to pick up other family members in the refugee camps. The combination of foot traffic south (most vehicles in Kosovo had license plates removed or stolen and, therefore, could not initially enter into Macedonia) and foot and vehicle (convoy and civilian) traffic north into Kosovo clogged the MSRs, as there was no other route available for convoys or refugees. All other routes were mined, went through Serbia, or were nothing more than treacherous goat trails through the mountains.

The greatest source of conflict three months into our operation was the methodical threatening and then the forceful eviction of Serbs from their houses so Albanians could move in. Many houses and apartments were once state-owned and, as such, were mostly occupied by Serbs. The Albanians claimed that since the state no longer existed, the property was rightfully Albanian property, as many had lived there before the Serbian takeover in the early 90s. The typical pattern included verbal threats, physical threats and assaults, hand grenades, and eventually killings or arson. There were very few property records available, and many that were available were skeptical, probably forged.

Refugees who returned home often found their furniture missing, much of it now in Serbian homes. They began searching houses for furniture; the KFOR could not distinguish looters from legitimate refugees repatriating. USKFOR quickly took the lead and organized "furniture repatriation" programs. The public was given an opportunity to return furniture that was not their own. The TF began identifying owners and returning property. This repatriation eliminated a significant caseload of "stolen property" we would have had to investigate.

Artillerymen and engineers helped establish a system for identifying owners of property. Additionally, we had a problem identifying rightful owners of land and houses. Many Serbs by now had fled, and many more Albanians (not Kosovo-Albanian) had begun arriving and "looking" for houses. The TF was adamant that it would not get involved in property disputes, a mission the TF would leave to the UN.

Resettlement operations are extremely difficult operations, especially when local records have been destroyed. The MP were like firemen, rushing from disturbance to disturbance trying to maintain some relative order and peace while UN administrators struggled with policy, attempting to address how best to get families back into

homes or shelters before winter.

POLICE INFORMATION OPERATIONS

This MP function is fairly new doctrine to the MP Corps. Kosovo showed us just how important it is to get a good plan together, a plan that not only addresses information flow and use inside police channels but also flow of "police information" collected from nonpolice units. The working relationship between the CID and the MP was outstanding. We formed a crime-analysis cell, initially an MP and a CID agent that sorted through police reports/cases and did some critical analysis of the information. They worked together daily and, within a short period, began producing significant results. We linked them in tightly with the battalion S2 section and eventually the intelligence-analyst cell at the TF headquarters.

The hardest parts of the information operations were collecting information the infantry, armor, and engineer units received from their daily contacts and patrols and then disseminating the information in a timely and organized fashion. Collecting information from the combat-arms units was extremely difficult at first. These units are not accustomed to police operations and tend to be very possessive of the land they occupy and the information they develop.

A more pressing problem confronted everyone in the TF, assimilating partner nations in our peacekeeping endeavor. Our soldiers worked with Russian, Greek, Polish, Ukraine, Swedish, Canadian, British, German, and United Arab Emirates soldiers on a routine basis.

We enhanced the police information operations with these combat-arms units through daily personal contacts with them, sharing information on patrols and patrol activities. Written reports and radio contact would not suffice. When we worked closely with them and took the time to speak face to face, the information flow was great, and all operations were significantly enhanced.

Soon, it became routine to pass all information, and that is the key, all information. We had to stress to these units that even the seemingly most mundane information might be the missing link for a police investigation. In return, the MP had to become better at providing feedback so the combat-arms units could not only see the fruits of their work but also use the information we had developed in our investigations. The Police Information Operations is truly a circuitous program that lies not only within police channels but also, as Kosovo proved, in nonpolice channels.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

This MP function was clearly the key task we accomplished after the two weeks in Kosovo. As the displaced civilians and refugees returned to their homes, our job became overwhelming. Land and house disputes occupied much of our early time in Kosovo. Tractors with wagons full of household items clogged roads. Many suspicious loads were stopped and, through investigation, we discovered the loads were stolen items. Our stolen- goods storage areas were quickly filled, and our detention center became a very busy operation.

As more Albanians returned (or as new ones entered) to Kosovo, the number of crimes against Serbs, retribution, rose sharply. Soon we found ourselves responding to as many as 30 arsons and several murders and attempted murders each day as Albanians began a systematic (random but quite abundant) cleansing of Serbs from Albanian villages or cities.

As we responded to cases, we soon found a commonality that was quite disturbing to police operations and to the democratic process. If a crime was committed against an Albanian, for the most part, we could investigate the case and receive good cooperation from citizens. If the crime was against a Serb, the Albanians imposed a code of silence that, if broken, resulted in serious injury or death to the Albanian. Most crimes soon became crimes against only Serbs, and our efforts were clearly frustrated and sabotaged by the code of silence and direct actions to taint evidence at the scene.

For the most part, MP responded to incidents we would expect to see in any peacekeeping operation. Because of the significant violence in the cases, and the sheer quantity of cases, CID could not respond to every case. The MP quickly found themselves becoming investigators. While we found the MP quite versed in basic MP procedures, many lacked the basic fundamentals of investigations. We had to take the time and teach many how to be basic investigators, to ask the right questions at the right time, so we could further develop the cases.

One of the greatest contributors to our investigative process was the MP team at the detention center. These MP would get the case and detainee and then immediately begin to develop the case further. We not only developed cases for court proceedings but also saw what connections or information we could obtain on other cases, either solved or unsolved. We found some serious criminals by continuing investigations within the detention facility.

All information was passed to the CID in our daily meetings. In these meetings, we routinely discussed the information and made daily determinations as to whether the CID should now pick up on a case. The CID was superb, as they provided sound guidance to all our MP, helped train them as investigators and, as necessary, got us on the right track. They did this while handling the significant caseload with which they had to contend.

The two most prevalent impediments to the TF policing portion of its peacekeeping efforts were the lack of police-related systems and the lack of the criminal and civil-court system from pretrial, through court, to post-trial confinement. The ethnic background of citizens could not be readily determined. Most administrative documents and records, such as licenses, registrations, and court and civil administration files, were burned. We found clear evidence of that in the key cities of Urosevac and Gnjilane.

Citizens were reluctant to talk, which also hindered investigative efforts. Detainees often asked where we ""beat" prisoners and where other prisoners would be executed. Once the detainees realized they would receive humane treatment, the information flow, as little as it was, completely dried up. All these factors made police work extremely difficult.

While the MP in the TF will probably never investigate as many serious crimes as they did in the six months in Kosovo, we will receive great dividends by ensuring that our MP understand the investigative process, questioning techniques, and evidence collection and processing.

In July, the TF responded to some major demonstrations, rock throwings, and statue destructions. The MP played a significant role in reducing tensions by using superb interpersonal communication skills; not one MP had to resort to firing a warning shot to reduce tensions. On the contrary, infantry and armor units effectively used warning shots (into the air) to reduce tensions and disperse near-violent crowds. The MP were key in de-escalating disturbances in Ranilug, Kamenica, Gnjilane, Urosevac, and Pasjane. These demonstrations tied up a significant number of assets and blocked the few main highways for hours.

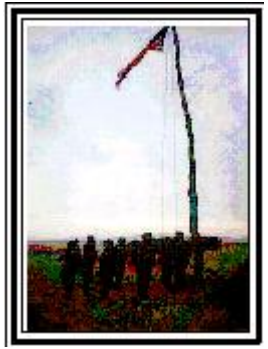
The TF began putting out information that encouraged the populace to air their grievances in a more peaceful manner. One method was through town-hall meetings or mayor meetings. Mayors were often instrumental in helping curb the violence or otherwise reduce tension. The other method was to demonstrate peacefully and not block the road.

While this option worked well, it still required a large number of troops to monitor the demonstration. There were very few major demonstrations after the town-hall meetings became routine. The MP did provide riot-control training to TF units, although we never did use riot-control formations to move the crowds. The crowds normally responded with firm but fair directions. We were ready for the worst!

Throughout the operation, we recognized a need for information operations, communicating with the populace in an attempt to shape the battlefield. The work of the civil-affairs teams and PSYOP teams was instrumental to our early success. Our MP teams worked with these teams daily, and the success stories are abundant. Soon after establishing operations, the civil-affairs teams helped the civilians re-establish a rudimentary radio station in Urosevac and later in Gnjilane.

TF commanders, to include the MP, spent two hours, daily, delivering messages to the population. Messages were public service-type announcements and information campaigns designed to lead the populace to desired behaviors. For the most part, the MP messages were well received. The radio was used to help mold public attitude, enhance roadway safety, and provide information on successes of the TF in reducing crime.

CONCLUSION



The battalion enjoyed tremendous successes throughout the deployment. Battling austere living conditions, the Balkan summer, and a nonexistent civil infrastructure caused all soldiers to come together quickly. We executed missions from every MP battlefield function. The TF, once in place and securing key objectives, looked to the MP often to guide them through "policing the battlefield." Nearly every incident required MP support or action. Our soldiers responded terrifically, a credit to their training, equipment, and good old American soldier determination. The Spartan Battalion proved once again it is always ready.

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No matter the odds, our soldiers never quit!